Che Harps of God Chouds They Play ACTIVIS)5 4501

MIZ GEORGE MACADAM

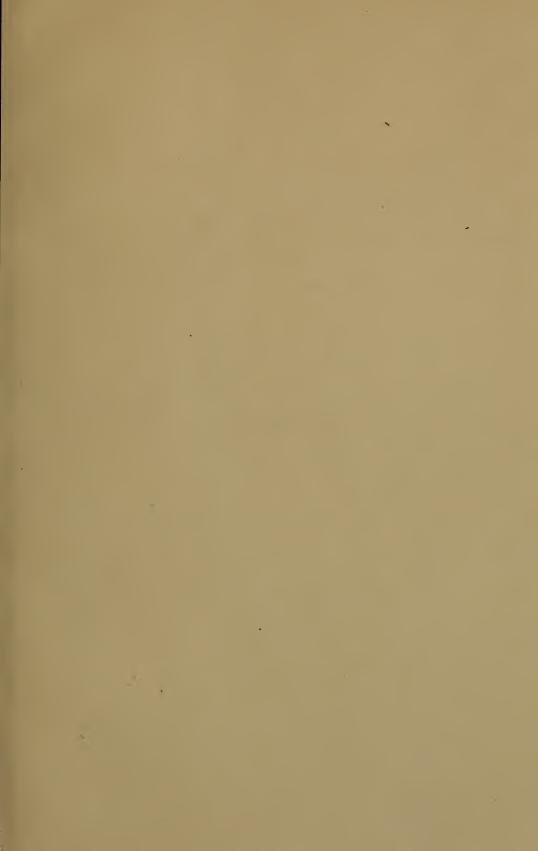


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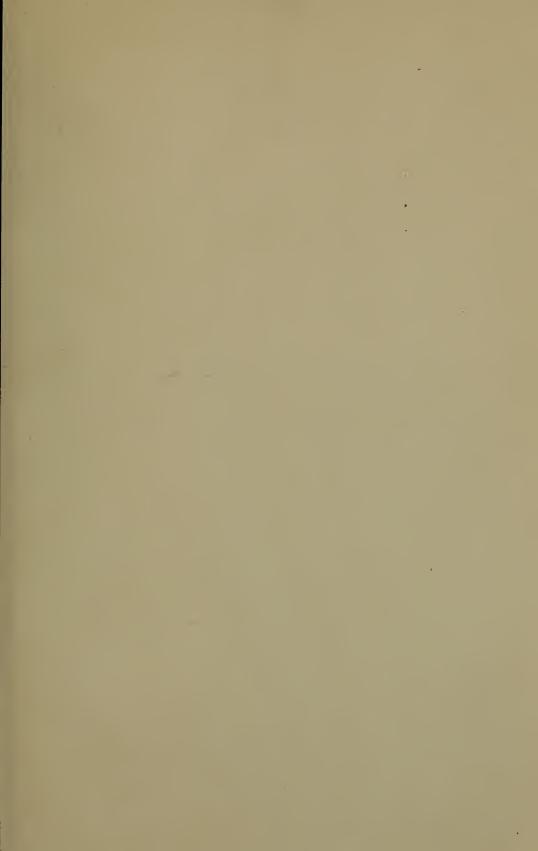
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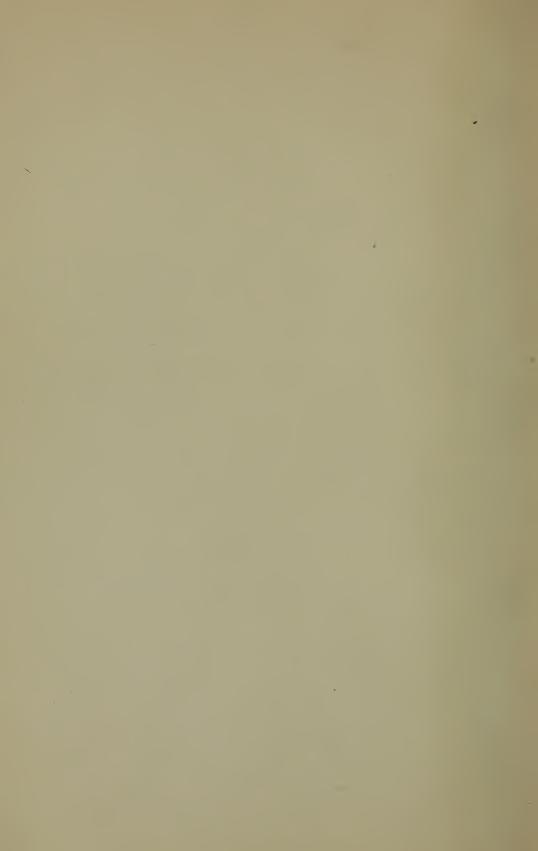
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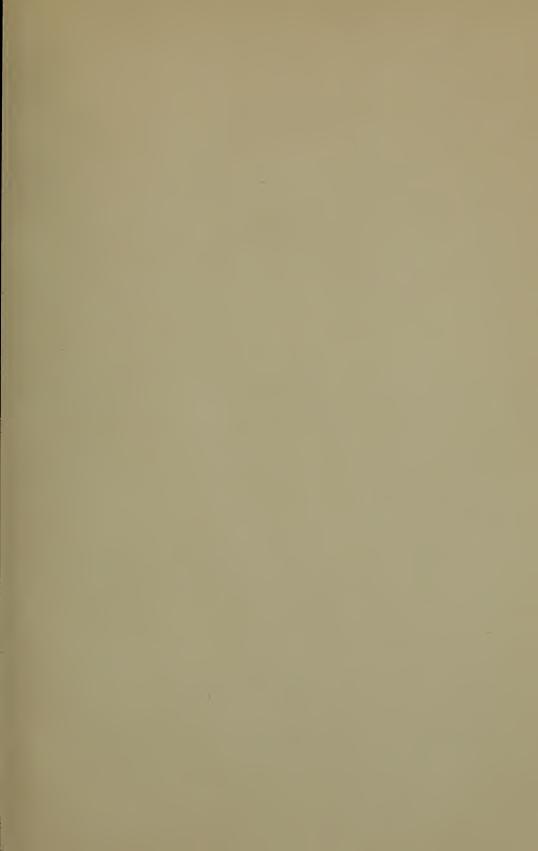
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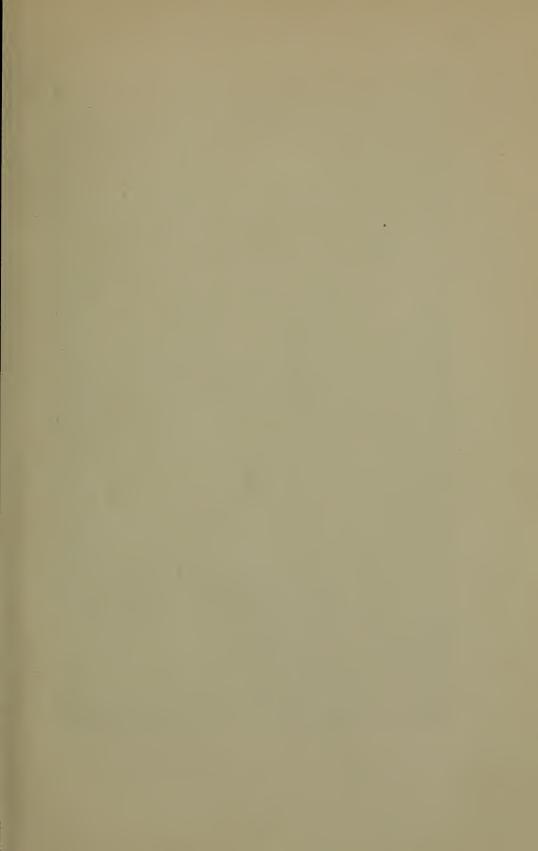






THE HARPS OF GOD

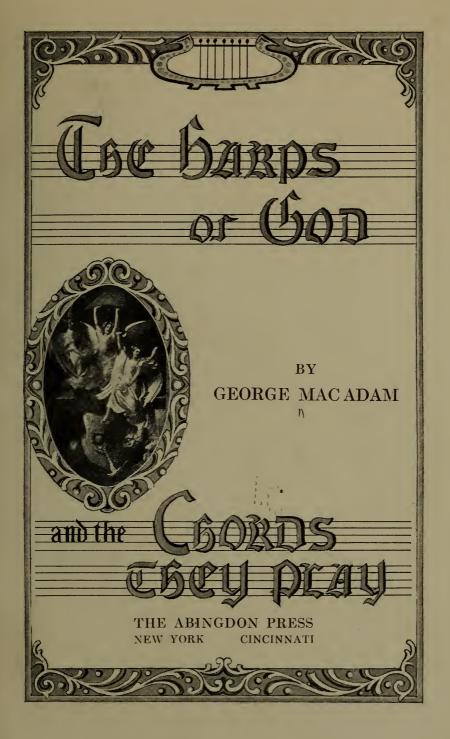






ST. CECILIA

From Painting by Raphael, 1483–1520



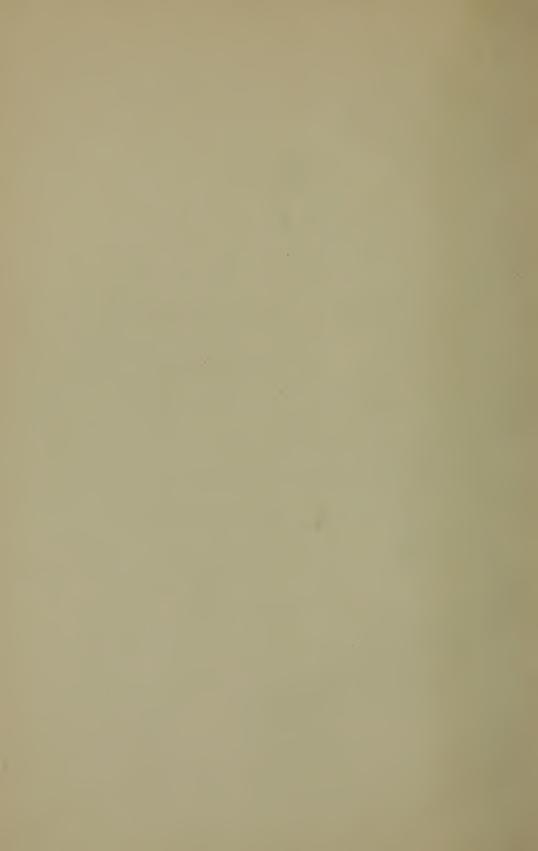
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I. The Harp

It is related of Hermes, the high priest of Osiris—B. C. 1800—that striking a tortoise shell which he had found on the banks of the Nile, he observed that it gave forth a pleasing sound.

A happy thought came to him, and he at once fashioned from it the first lyre, the father of the harp.



THE HARP AMONG INSTRUMENTS



THE HARP AMONG INSTRUMENTS

THE glamour with which poetry and legend have invested the harp may have something to do with the tender place it occupies in our thought to-day. Many of us when in reminiscent mood can hear a mother sing the old-time song, the refrain of which ran,

"Bring my harp to me again; Let me sing a gentle strain: Let me hear its tones once more, Ere I pass to yon bright shore."

However it may be accounted for, its music touches a deeper and more sympathetic chord than that of any other instrument. It has the voice of poesy, of sentiment, and speaks the sweetest, tenderest emotions of the soul.

Thomas Moore has an exquisite picture of its origin. He sings the woes of a beautiful seanymph who loved in vain a mortal youth. On the shore she oft wandered in hope of seeing him again, her heart breaking with grief,

Till heaven looked with pity on true love so warm, And changed to this soft harp the sea-maiden's form: And her hair shedding teardrops from all its bright rings, Fell o'er her white arm to make the gold strings. In another poem he tells us how love came to be the harp's sweet story. In a bower where oft came a couple "With love's first wonderful rapture blest" hung a harp. As he told the story of the passion which had possessed his soul and she looked back at him with the pure, tender response of the heavenly fire in her eyes, the harp listened and picked up all the

> sighs and eloquent pauses, learned all the tender tones and sentiments, so that now whenever

> > its strings are caressed,

It sings again Love's old refrain,

Which has in it all of heaven and joy,

Tendered by an undertone of sorrow and pain.

The harp had become an old instrument even in the days of Moore. It seemed to pass with the age of minstrelsy and we hear the old poet sighing:

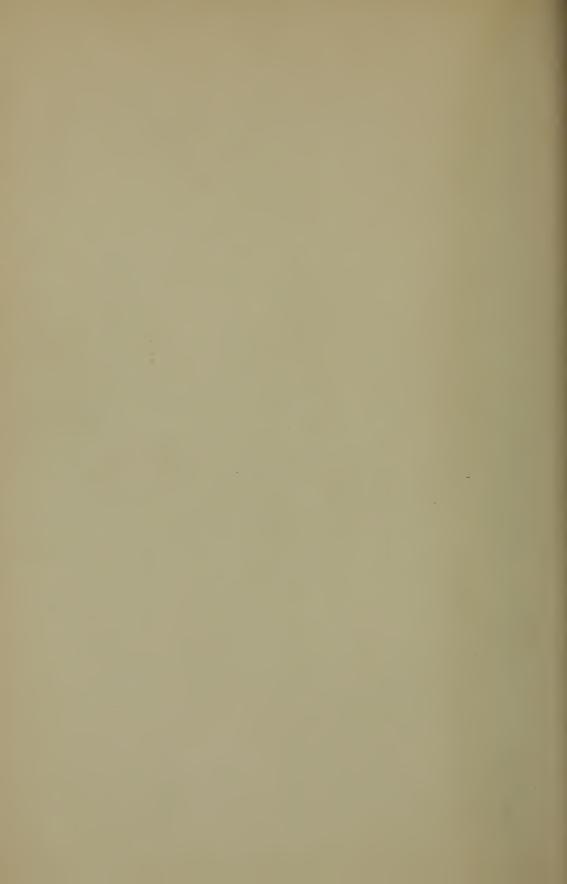
Sing, sad harp, thus sing to me; Alike our doom is cast: Both lost to all but memory, We live but in the past.

THE HARP AMONG INSTRUMENTS 13

But there is a revival of interest in its beauty and power. Defects once regarded as fundamental have been overcome and the harp is assured a position more kingly than it occupied in the days of romance. It is once more a classic among musical instruments. Even to-day the great scores of Meyerbeer, Gounod, Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner are not complete without it.



THE HARP OF GOD



THE HARP OF GOD

This life of ours is like a wild æolian harp Of many a joyous strain.—Longfellow.

Among all the marvelous scenes unfolded to the Seer of Patmos perhaps none makes such demand upon our imagination as that in which he saw "a sea of glass mingled with fire" and standing by it the victorious saints, "having in their hands the harps of God."

And they sang. You may have heard a thousand trained singers with splendid orchestral accompaniment render some of our great oratorios. Garibaldi's Hymn was sung by a choir and orchestra of five thousand, with an audience of twenty thousand people joining in the choruses and the great hero himself standing on a platform between the two—certainly an inspiring event. But what earthly experience can suggest to our imagination all that John heard and saw? For there were gathered the strong and mighty of earth, the overcomers of God, singing their anthem of eternal triumph—"the song of Moses and the Lamb."

With their hands touching the quivering strings of the harps of God, and their voices

lifted in paeans of victory, the sound must have been as of many waters and great thunders, whose music made vibrant every star and attuned into perfect harmony every rushing sound of the universe.

It is a well-known fact that fine particles of matter, under the influence of rhythmical sounds, will, in obedience to some mysterious law, arrange themselves into symmetrical forms. And perhaps Frances Osgood was as scientific as poetical when, conceiving that music was a great agency at creation in the arrangement of chaos into order, she heard in her soul some such choir:

The Father spake and in grand reverberations
Through space rolled on the mighty music-tide,
While to its low, majestic modulations,
The clouds of chaos slowly swept aside.
And wheresoe'er in his rich creation,
Sweet music breathes in wave or bird or soul,
'Tis but the faint and far reverberation,
Of that great tune to which the planets roll.

What the harps of God may have been we cannot tell. The Great Artist, if he wished, could mold their exquisite shape out of pure, crystal light. He could give resonance with some of the wood of the Tree of Life, could string it with golden sunbeams and touch it with zephyrs until, like the fabled harp of Apollo, it would melt the very rocks and set

the stones to singing. But the figure, surely, is designed to arouse in us anticipations of the delights and pleasures in which harmony peculiarly ministers here and hereafter.

However, the true harp of God; that which under his hand produces the subtlest and sweetest music, is the Harp of a Human Life.

This application of the figure is not new. When David formed his orchestras for worship he placed among the harps and psalteries and "instruments of ten strings" the human heart. When Paul speaks of Christians as "those who make sweet melody in their hearts to God" the expression he uses presents in the original the thought of striking the strings of an instrument—"those who strike melody from their hearts to God."

It is a familiar figure in literature. Long-fellow has the thought of David:

This life of ours is like a wild æolian harp Of many a joyous strain.

Shakespeare has the same conception. Hamlet hands Guildenstern a musical instrument and asks him to play upon it. But he protests that he cannot, and Hamlet responds:

"Yet you would play upon me; you would sound me, from my lowest note to the top of my compass. Call me what instrument you will, you cannot play upon me." Charles Kingsley varies the figure in no essential sense when he writes:

Our souls are organ pipes of diverse stop And various pitch: each with proper notes Thrilling beneath the selfsame breath of God, Though poor alone, yet joined, they're harmony.

The conception is true to our profoundest thought. There is in our inmost heart a feeling that we are a part of an infinite order, the design of which is harmony. The words of Madison Cawein ring true to our inner vision:

All things are wrought of melody,
Unheard yet full of speaking spells:
Within the rock, within the tree,
A soul of music dwells.

A mute symphonic sense that thrills
The silent frame of mortal things;
Its heart in the ancient hills
And in each flower sings.

To harmony all growth is set:

Each seed is but a music note,

From which each plant, each violet,

Evolves its purple note.

Compact of melody, the rose
Wooes the soft wind with strain on strain
Of crimson; and the lily blows
Its white bars to the rain.

The trees are paeans; and the grass One long green fugue, beneath the sun; Song is their life and all shall pass, Shall cease when song is done." Under the spell of a summer's day it doesn't take a poet to feel the rhythm, and hear the songs which nature sings, nor to see among the leaves of the trees,

Strange minstrels on their airy harps
Among the trembling branches playing.

In our highest reaches of thought we realize that the end of existence and the ultimate law of life is harmony. We are assured that there is a "music of the spheres" to which we are subtly responsive; that we are a part of the chorus with the morning stars when they sing together; that we shall never find rest nor peace till we tune our lives to the concord that is in All-Good. Lanier has told us that "Love is music in search of a word," and we know that beauty is only harmony. Every grace of a virtuous life is a symphony in the concert of humanity. Every virtue of a strong character is a majestic fugue; every deed a part of a sonata. A Christly life is a hymn of praise, and even the impulses of love and fellowship are antiphonal.

Perhaps we are made to feel the truth underlying this conception more clearly from life's discords than its harmonies. We are intuitively conscious of lives about us which are altogether absonant. They are a discordant note in the

home, a disharmony in society, a jangle everywhere. Our own souls are often vexed with disharmony within. Conscience and passion, will and desire, hope and fear, faith and doubt, duty and self are as discordant as the strings of an untuned harp. And pushing along this thought we come to an essential truth of life, namely, that sin is discord. It is as if some master demon who knew nothing of the instrument upon which he plays strikes all the strings of the human heart a-jangle.

Henceforth there is no harmony anywhere, for,

If sin be in the heart,

The fairest sky is foul, and sad the summer weather.

The eye no longer sees the lambs at play together,

The dull ear cannot hear the birds that sing so sweetly,

And all the joy of God's good earth has gone completely,

If sin be in the heart.

For when sin comes in it is as if a great, harsh hand had smitten into a discord the strings we were so delicately tuning. The relations of life are interrupted and broken, the correspondences with peace and calm are shattered, the concord in the life and between life and its environment is gone. We have lost both the peace of God and peace with God.

Music, more than any other force which plays upon the human heart, brings us face to

face with the Infinite. She, more than any other art, lifts the curtains of the spiritual world, making us feel and discern, though dimly, the great continent of psychic truth, the outlines of which are admitted now by scientific thought, lying ahead of us. More clearly than we can explain we feel it, that the soul within us seeks ever to get its note from the Eternal and to chorus our finite life with the Infinite.

For this is peace—to lose the lonely note
Of self in love's celestial ordered strain:
And this is joy—to find oneself again
In Him whose harmonies forever float
Through all the spheres of song, below, above—
For God is music, even as God is love.

The soul senses the presence of a Master Musician who has created it subject to the law of a harmony that is in all things else. One can never totally deny the existence of a spiritual world so long as music ministers to him in a trembling reed or pulsing string. "Music is the process of disentangling spirit from matter," some one has said. If this be true, then the agent in the process of disentanglement is the soul. It is the soul which finds in musical sounds a mysterious language—one might almost say of a world known long ago—which it innately understands and in response to which

it has a whole vocabulary of emotions that no other speech of earth may arouse.

It is the soul that in the G string of a violin hears a call to which it opens all its flood gates of ecstasy; which, with a minor chord, goes down into a valley of sorrow "as though it were losing paradise over again," and which, behind the thundering organ and the swelling of a great oratorio, swings upward till the enrapturing harmonies blend with the chorus from the opening gates of the Celestial City. Music is the Muse who brings us to the threshold of a mysterious world, the exploration of which lies a tempting adventure adown man's future. There, with the unfolding of his soul-faculties he will be led into the complete attainment of the harmony of which he himself is capable and this individual culture will inevitably break into a social order which may be looked for as The Kingdom of Concord or The Kingdom of God and of which music is a sweet prophetess.

Music, thou mystery of sound,
Thou child of wonder birth,
Where words leave off—there first unwound
Thy melodies to earth.
No one thy message understands;
We feel, but can't express;
Thy diamond links escape our hands,
But not our consciousness!

Uplifted on the wings of song
The soul of man may rise,
Pierce through the night of sin and wrong,
Claim kindred with the skies!
Earth's sweetest lays climb on the ways
That reach up from the sod,
With footsteps fleet to kiss the feet
Of music's master,—God.



THE HARP IN TUNE



THE HARP IN TUNE

Strange that a Harp of a thousand strings Should keep in tune so long!—Watts.

It may be clearly accepted that God is the Master of this life-harp. To Job it was a strange thing that men did not recognize this: "But none sayeth, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" But David cried: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. O Lord, thou art our Father: and we are all the work of thy hand. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

There is a legend that upon the walls of an ancient castle there hung for many years an old harp. It was dusty with time and broken. Many a hand had taken it down, adjusted the strings, and essayed to play upon it, but the old instrument responded only with plaintive and discordant wailing. One day a strolling minstrel came to the castle. His eye fell upon the harp and rested there an instant while wonder and hope grew in his face. And when a cry of astonishment escaped him the harp responded with a sound that set all its strings a-quiver with rare tone. The minstrel took it

down, caressed it tenderly, and then tuning it placed loving fingers upon the strings. old harp seemed to abandon itself to him, and the pent-up richness of the years came forth under his hand, for its master had come. The illustration serves to direct us to a great truth. The human soul has its Master, and, like the harp, is broken, out of tune, and intractable until it falls into the hands of God. Conversion is only a new hand—God's hand touching the strings. There are many people whose lives are discordant and unsatisfactory with no apparent reason for it. They have money, they achieve fame, they find pleasure, and the world yields to them, but ever leaving them dissatisfied and disappointed. Yet when the Great Harpist finds them and they surrender to him, these blessings blend under his Hand into a delightful harmony. The soul having made its adjustment, all other gifts and possessions are brought into that subjectivity wherein is developed their highest felicity and greatest value. For over eight centuries the life-harp of Francis of Assisi has enriched human living. Tone quality has been given to thousands of lives by Madame de Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, Francis de Sales, and others, from whose hearts God has caressed wonderful music.

The secret of a strong, beautiful life is in its accord with the eternal harmonies. "Where did you get that new piece, Mary?" asked a mother of her daughter at the piano. "It isn't a new piece, mother. The piano has been tuned." Just so. Many a life, with a wealth of tone for which the world goes hungry, with a beautiful score before it, plays a jangle because it has not fallen into the hands of the Master. A soul out of God has imperfect adjustment. To such, trouble is a discord; old age is a dissonance; death is a breaking of the instrument. The minor chords have no place in their repertoire. When David learned the blessed uses of affliction he cried, "He has placed a new song in my mouth." What a difference there was in Paul's life after it become adjusted! Tennyson might have had him in mind when he wrote:

Love took up the Harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;

Smote the chord of self, that, trembling passed in music out of sight.

The hand of the Master had tuned the heart and swept the strings producing that lovesong which begins, "If I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

"Change the tune!" shouted Napoleon to his bandmaster, as he saw his army weary and lagging, with the summit of the Alps yet far above them. Change the tune of your life. Ahead lie the steep paths, the rocky passes. You cannot make the summit at the present rate. Your heart is lagging because it has not found the music of life. Get the rhythm from heaven. Take your tempo from the invisible. Let the song which aligns the angelic hosts get into your heart.

Let God chorus your life.

The soul of a man
Is a harp of a thousand strings,

and each virtue must sound its own note in the ensemble. Peter had this thought in mind when he wrote to his friends, "Chorus your faith." That is, make your life a chorus in which your faith leads, but with which all the graces and beauties of Christian character harmonize. Plato refers to a man whose faith and conduct agree when he wrote: "And such a one I deem to be the true musician attuned to a fairer harmony than that of a lyre or any pleasant instrument of music." Faith alone sings a poor part. She is best heard and understood when she is expressed by a mighty chorus in which virtue, knowledge, self-control, pa-

tience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love blend their subtle and beautiful melodies into a burst of harmony which the hurrying world will linger to hear. But let your faith ring true to God's note. Let it be full and rich with the tones of the spiritual life. Some time ago a group of scientists spent some days by the chasm at Niagara in the endeavor to catch the dominant note of that chorus of waters. Do you listen for the God-note! Get your soul en rapport with the spiritual world. Let the echoes from the "sea of glass" flood all the avenues of your life with the bewitching concords of virtue.

It is possible that to produce this result God may have to make you over. I have heard the story of a distinguished violinist who ordered a manufacturer to construct for him the best violin his skill could produce. It failed to please him, and in his disappointment and impatience he broke it into many pieces and strode from the place. But the maker gathered the parts together and reconstructed it. Then he sent for the artist, who no sooner drew his bow across the strings than he recognized the tones he had heard in his soul and which he desired in a violin. A great musician said of one of his promising but emotionless pupils: "She sings well, but she lacks something. If I

were single, I would court her; I would marry her and I would break her heart. In six months she would be the greatest singer in Europe." It was the song from a heart crushed by sin and broken in its pride that David dared offer in the presence of God.

The broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

In fact, it is God's chance to make a musical instrument out of the human heart. Only when it is broken from its past can he reassemble the shattered pieces around his thought of essential harmony. How melting the tones, how sympathetic the chords that come from the heart out of which the pride of this-world-liness has been broken! The notes of truth which ring from the Master's teaching are clear as a bell, but is not the sweetness of them due to the "broken body," the stricken and smitten life?

If the Great Musician may have his way with us, he can take the most commonplace life and produce a refrain of wonderful inspiration to those who hear it. What were the days of chivalry without the minstrel and his harp? The story of heroism, the tale of valorous deed went from the quivering strings straight to the heart of the hearer. It is the music to which your life is written which sends it into and

makes it a part of other lives. A young man spoke of his work as the "daily grind." He could not better express the depressing monotony of many lives. You can hear the grit meeting the steel. You can see the will holding the life upon the wheel that cuts into nerve and heart. But there is a Living Presence who can change, arrange, and scale all the sounds of even the daily grind until they are harmonious, and the life may sing:

"Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear the music ringing:
It finds an echo in my soul;
How can I keep from singing?"

It is related of one of the early martyrs, who before his execution was publicly exhibited in an iron cage, that his cheerful countenance led one to ask him the secret. "O," he said, "you can see these bars, but you cannot hear the music." What were the notes on those bars? He can tell whose faith transposes the earthly din into the heavenly song. Beneath the noted chimes of Saint Nicholas in Amsterdam, away up in the tower, sits a man, his hands encased in wooden gloves. He strikes the keys and the great bells above him respond. To him there might be no music in this—just the sound of wood upon wood, the creaking of the mechanism and the deafening clang utterly devoid of

beauty; but away on the highways the traveler hears and is charmed. The peasant lifts his face from the soil and worships. The city man stops in his mad rush, while for a moment the music steals into his soul. So there are some people who will stop to hear the refrain from your life. There are hearts hungering for the note which only you may sound. There are faces to be lifted and suffused with hope by the melody fretted from your stricken heart. There are souls over which the memory of your song shall etch a trail of beauty and inspiration forever.

The Quaker poet heard a woman sing. His songless creed made protest against the sweet, pervasive power of her song. He said, as if in apology, while he acknowledged its influence:

"What could I other than I did? Could I a singing-bird forbid? Deny the wind-stirred leaf? Rebuke The music of the forest brook?

She went with morning from my door, But left me richer than before: All felt behind the singer stood A sweet and gracious womanhood.

O white soul! from that far-off shore Float some sweet song the waters o'er, Our faith confirm, our fears dispel, With the old voice we loved so well!" Let the Master have his instrument. Let him tune and adjust it. Let him play upon it all the days of your earthly life, until its tones shall be rich and strong enough to make music as the Harp of God on the shore of the sea of glass. For the music that is in us passes not with the passing of these bodies. Omar Khayyam sang, as he thought, the lapsing of the noble temple-harp of the ancient Egyptians:

Methinks

'Twere time to break and cast it in the fire,
The vain old harp, that, breathing from its strings,
No music more to charm the ears of man,
May, from its scented ashes, as it burns,
Breathe resignation to the harper's soul.

But its sweet music found grander form at the hands of later Phœnicians and Milesians, whose harp transcended even our modern creation. So the music of the human soul is imperishable. Somewhere, sometime, somehow it shall be given a form divinely responsive to the touch of the Master Musician.

O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

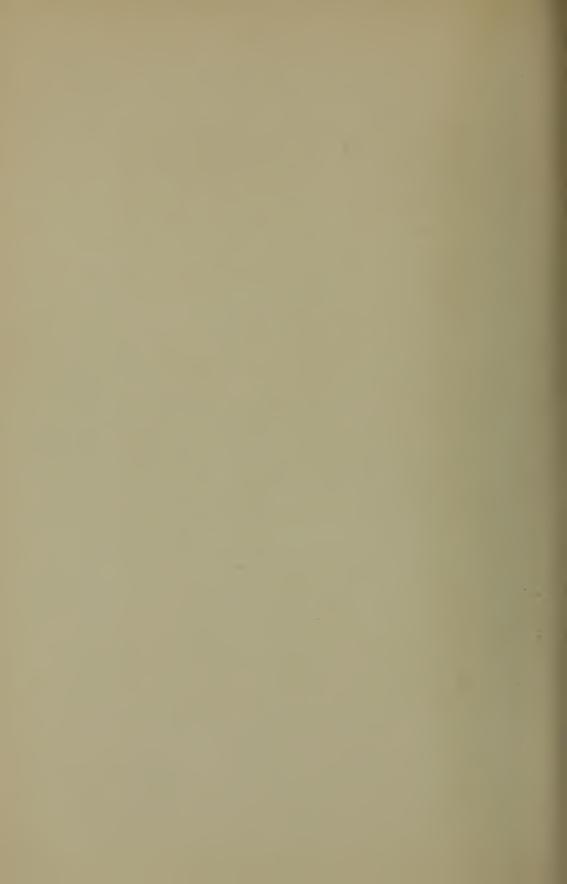
We faintly hear, we dimly see, In differing phrase we pray; But, dim or clear, we own in thee The Light, the Truth, the Way! Thy litanies, sweet offices Of love and gratitude; Thy sacramental liturgies The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!

DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL

From Painting by Schopin









II. Harp-Chords

Angel voices sung the mercy of their God,

And strung their harps.

-Moore.

Time has laid his hand Upon my heart, gently, not smiting it,

But as a harper lays his open palm Upon his harp to deaden its vibrations.

—Longfellow.

He who would be the tongue of this wide land

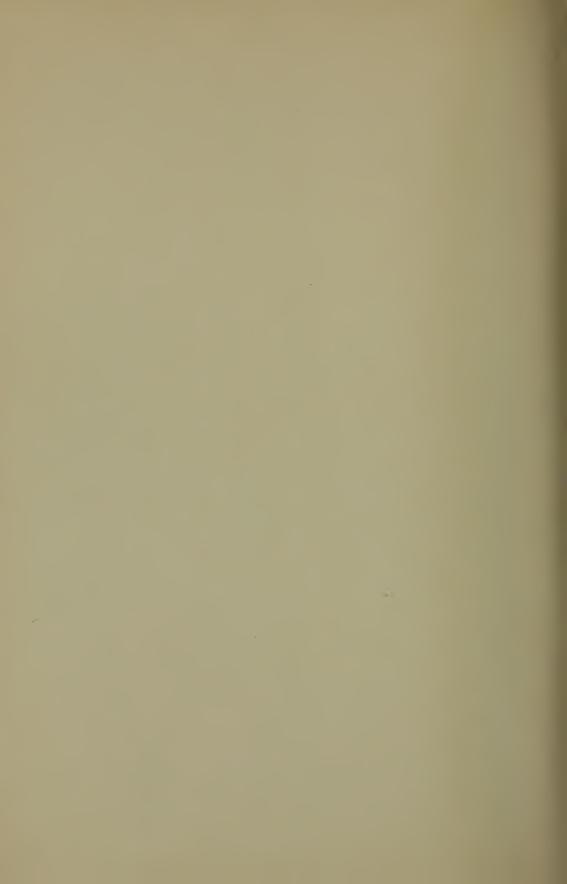
Must string his harp with chords of sturdy iron.

And strike it with a toil-imbrowned hand.

—Lowell.



THE MATCH-LESS MELODIES



THE MATCHLESS MELODIES

He touched his harp, and nations heard entranced. As some vast river of unfailing source, Rapid, exhaustless, deep, his numbers flowed, And opened new fountains in the human heart.

-Pollock.

From the life-harp God has produced some matchless melodies. Some great soul, like Luther, sounds his one vibrant note through a generation—just one note—which rises above every other sound of our human world and by its very dominance compels all other tones to gather themselves into accord.

What exquisite strains from this life-harp come! Sometimes God will take a fragile, broken life, as Apollo took up the rifted lute, and find in it subduing tones which melt the rocks and set the stones to singing.

What undertones of pain throb from this life-harp! The Great Musician presses the heart-strings upon the frets of life and refrains in exquisite minor key force their way into the world. We call them our "Songs in the Night." Such they are, as Newman sang on the becalmed orange boat—

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on.

The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead thou me on.

Such as Wesley sang in his dark hour—

Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly.

Such songs as speak the universal language of sorrow and illustrate the truth so beautifully spoken by Gerald Massey—

The heart is like an instrument whose strings Steal nobler music from life's many frets: The golden threads are spun through suff'ring's fire And all the rarest hues of human life Take radiance and are rainbowed out in tears.

Many of earth's sorrow-swept hearts seem most like those old castles in the forests, stormbeaten, yet filling their own loveliness and the dim shadows of the encompassing wood with exquisite melodies from Æolian harps stretched from the broken turrets. George Matheson beautifully brings this out in his reference to the "School of Sorrow": "And so, my soul, thou art receiving a music-lesson from thy Father. Thou art being educated for the choir invisible. There are chords too minor for the angels. There may be heights in the symphony which are beyond thy scale—heights which the angels alone can reach. But there

are depths which belong to thee, and can only be touched by thee. Thy Father is training thee for the part the angels cannot sing; and the school is sorrow. In the night he is preparing thy song. In the valley he is tuning thy voice. In the cloud he is deepening thy chords. In the storm he is enriching thy pathos. In the rain he is sweetening thy melody. In the cold he is molding thine expression. In the transition from hope to fear he is perfecting thy lights and shades. Despise not thy school of sorrow, O my soul! It will give thee a unique part in the universal song."

There are harmonies brought out by prosperity. This life-harp is sometimes an æolian upon which the zephyrs produce tones which are lost when the gales touch the strings. As the rays of the rising sun fell upon the statue of Memnon it responded with strains of music. We have all listened and looked up in gladness as some soul has cried his joy when the sun smiled upon him,

And echoes did feed on the sweetness, Repeating it long.

It is as true that there are some harmonies which only storms can develop. A story runs that in the Black Forest of Germany an oldtime baron built a castle with two lofty towers spanning a deep gorge. He stretched great wires from one to the other. The zephyrs could do nothing with such an instrument. But when the gales came sweeping down the defiles of the mountains and the storms played upon the strings his mighty hurricane-harp thrilled the whole pile with its harmony. So at the gate of his Gethsemane the Master "sang a hymn." The storm which bore down upon him made his life a mighty harp singing to every tempest-tossed life. Thus from his cell Milton rimed and from his prison Bunvan sang. Even so the whispering breezes play upon us and the thundering gales smite us, developing the resonance and tonality which have their place in the overture of humanity.

But of all the forces which are able to entice music from this life-harp there is none like the Spirit of God, because only he touches the higher ranges of tone quality. It is interesting to note how surely Paul states cause and effect when he says, "Be filled with the Spirit," "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." It has been Spirit-filled lives from which, at the critical times in human history, God has produced the "glorious spiritual note," which, becoming dominant, has lifted the failing chorus of humanity. At times when society seemed to be falling to pieces, when folly and sin were

drowning by their discord the marching tunes to which the race moves onward, the needed tone has suddenly risen above the din, as the song of Orpheus rose over that of the sirens. Some voice pulsating with spiritual power has lifted the keynote. Hearts have caught it, voices have sung it, and the halting, straggling line straightens out and the human mob becomes an army swinging on its triumphant way to the rhythm of the song.

Many times society has been saved by this note stricken from a human heart. History with its Savonarolas, Luthers, Andreas Hoefers, Lincolns, justifies the word of Lowell,

He who would be the tongue of this wide land, Must string his harp with cords of sturdy iron.

From such as these the race has caught a new marching tune. And so shall it be with the times upon which we have fallen. Do not fear. God will find the singing-tone in some Spiritfilled life which shall give us our keynote for another day's march.

But this is essentially true too of the smaller groups of society. "Be filled with the Spirit," and you shall be the singing-tone in your own home. There was once in a certain family one whom they named "The Princess" because she seemed to belong to a world apart and to get her alignments from the spiritual realm. But her life sang the note which lifted and rearranged upon the higher plane of human harmony all the lives of that circle. The world owed a group of strong men and beautiful, patient women to the song the Spirit elicited from the life of that sister. "Be filled with the Spirit," and you shall be the singing-tone among your friends and comrades. The finest epitaph ever written was ordered carved by a group of friends upon the monument of one of their number: "It was easier to be good when she was with us."

A great musical critic once wrote that the message of Mozart's music ran: "Blessed are the pure in heart"; that of Beethoven, "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Some one adds: "Chopin seems to say, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." What is the message from your lifemusic? You may have yours as verily as did these artists. Heart melody is a kind of music which does not depend upon the artistic gift or upon the musical culture possessed at the most by few. Everyone who will can make it. And because it is spiritual it is that which nothing external can effect or remove, neither can it be overcome by the noises of the world or the

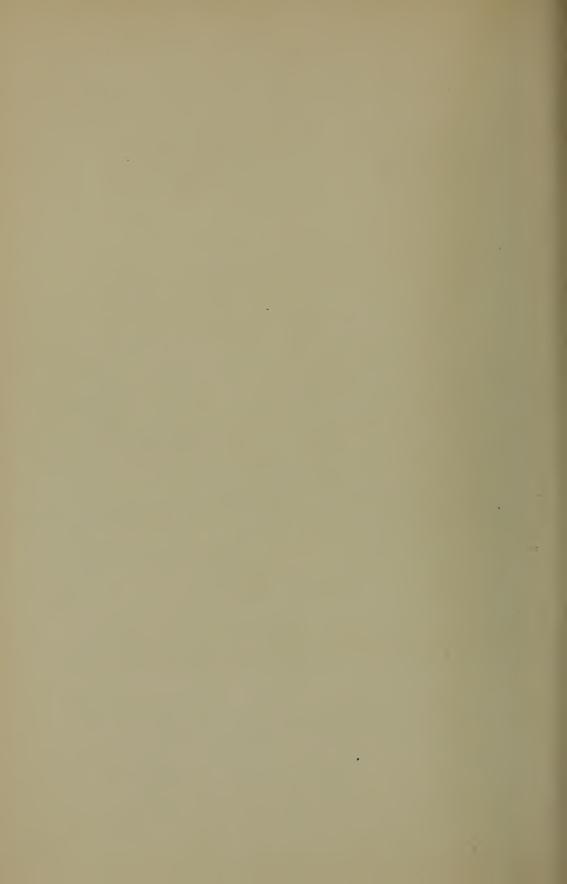
cries of the market place. There are some people who are waiting for your heart-song.

Sing! Whether you are able to lift a musical note or not, sing! Be a sweetly pervasive, spiritual keynote in your circle of companionships. If there's a song in your soul, your world will catch it and chorus with you.



THE CONSOLING CHRIST

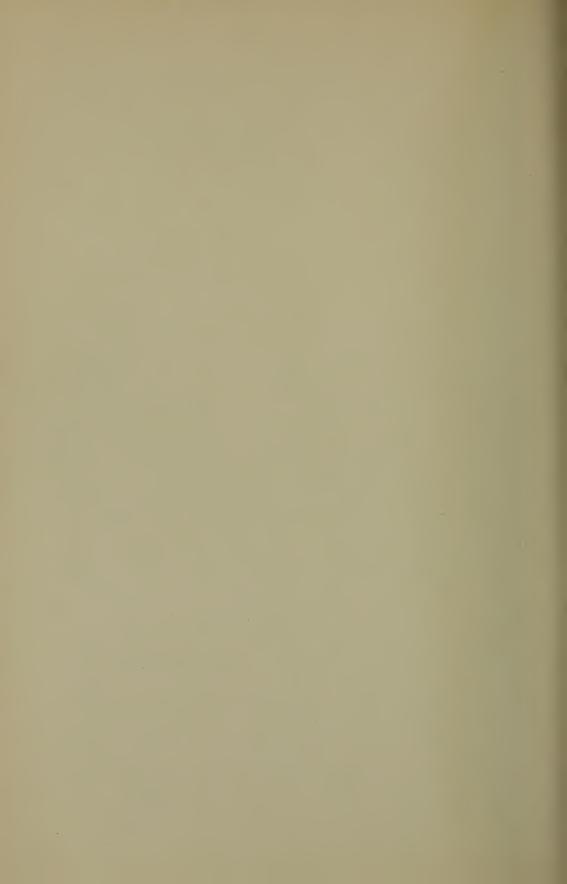
From Painting by Plockhorst, 1825







THE CHORD OF SYMPATHY



THE CHORD OF SYMPATHY

I have compassion on the multitude because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way.

—Jesus.

The man who melts with social sympathy, though not allied, is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth.—Euripides.

My heart, which by a secret harmony still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet.—Milton.

One strong, full chord which the Spirit-filled life will sound is the Chord of Sympathy. It has three melodies, Appreciation, Pity, and Love, which, blended, express the rich harmony so dominating in the life of Jesus. This even more than his claims to Messiahship or the recital of our Christian creeds rivets the affection of the world to him.

Sympathy may be subtly expressed. Said a young friend, regretfully, "I never know what to say to people who are in sorrow, and the more I feel for them the less I can say." But, after all, the saying it matters little, though the felicitous expression of comfort is a beautiful gift. What does matter and what does help is

the fellowship which finds words unnecessary or at least inadequate.

More than men need alms, they need the human touch. Gold may do much to alleviate suffering: it can do little for sorrow. A kindly deed, a friendly word will make of a dry crust a feast for a hungry heart. These are days when we glibly speak of the brotherhood of man, of mercy and help, of sweet charity, and while we speak we wonder what sum will correctly and fully express our pity. Some one has said, "It is very hard to know how to help people when you can't send them blankets or coal or Christmas dinners." But these things are the smallest of human needs. Jesus gave no gold; instead he dispensed the alms of a sympathetic and loving heart. "Silver and gold have I none" was said to the cripple at the Gate Beautiful, "but such as I have give I unto thee." And they took him by the hand. What they gave was better than a mint of gold. We are all cripples, in some sense, at some Gate Beautiful, and the one gift which gives strength to rise is that of human sympathy. is said a beggar asked for alms of a man on the street. The man felt for money, and finding none, replied, "Brother, I have nothing to give you, I am sorry." "But you said Brother," answered the beggar, and that is an alms."

When we offer a service or gifts without this we debauch our benefice and rob our own hearts.

As Sir Launfal rode forth all radiant with the passion to win the Holy Grail, a leper crouching by the way,

> Seemed the one blot on the summer morn, So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

But the leper spurned the gift and cried,

"He gives only worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty:
But he who gives but a slender mite
And gives to that which is out of sight,
The hand cannot grasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it a store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

We encounter some people who tell us that sympathy is a waste. That to bear the burdens and assume the cares of others is to scatter one's heart energies for naught. So, long ago, they decried the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment as a waste of treasure. It "might have been sold for three hundred pence." That same economic spirit may actuate one to withhold his sympathies and to live apart from his brother's joys and tragedies. But we cannot so violate a primal law of our being with impunity. It will react upon our heart and dry

up the very fountains to which we must go for our own refreshment and peace. It is poor economy, for "it tendeth to poverty" of soul.

Sympathy is the universal bond. The very word is musical and means an accordness with other people. It involves that power to reproduce the feelings of others in our own souls that resides in the string and makes it respond when its own peculiar note is struck, and by which you may tune two instruments into harmony. It is the ability to forget self and surrender your own note in the endeavor to harmonize with another. "I can't sing with She flats her E's, and I find that my voice shades off in sympathy with hers. It's getting me into a bad habit." So said one member of a quartet, speaking of the soprano. But in the making of life's music the absolutely perfect note is no more required than is the instinct for harmony. We can't any of us sing only solo parts. We must join the ensemble. "The hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee." It must recognize the unity of the body. Even in matter there are what we know in physics as sympathetic sounds, a response which solid bodies make to each other. So there is in humanity an accordness which the attuned ear recognizes as running through all the intricate human relationship. "Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one;" so said Carlyle. This is the basic tie transcending that of country, speech, color, or blood in its appeal to all men, for it belongs to humanity. It speaks our common origin, our common toil and struggle. It is one man's demand upon another, whoever and wherever he be. James Whitcomb Riley has put this into touching expression in a poem, one stanza of which runs:

As the little white hearse went glimmering by—
A stranger petted a ragged child
In the crowded walks, and she knew not why,
But he gave her a coin for the way she smiled.
And the bootblack thrilled with pleasure strange,
As a customer put back his change
With a kindly hand and a grateful sigh,
As the little white hearse went glimmering by.

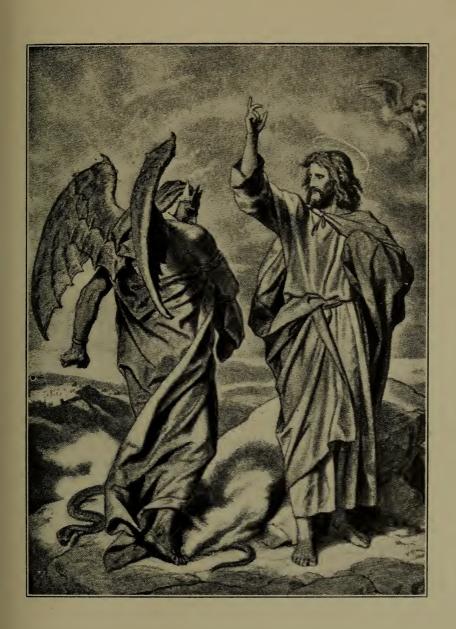
Sympathy underlies all the artificial distinctions of life and is the one unifying chord to which all hearts are tuned. The Harp of God must be rich with this sweet, satisfying tone.



TEMPTATION

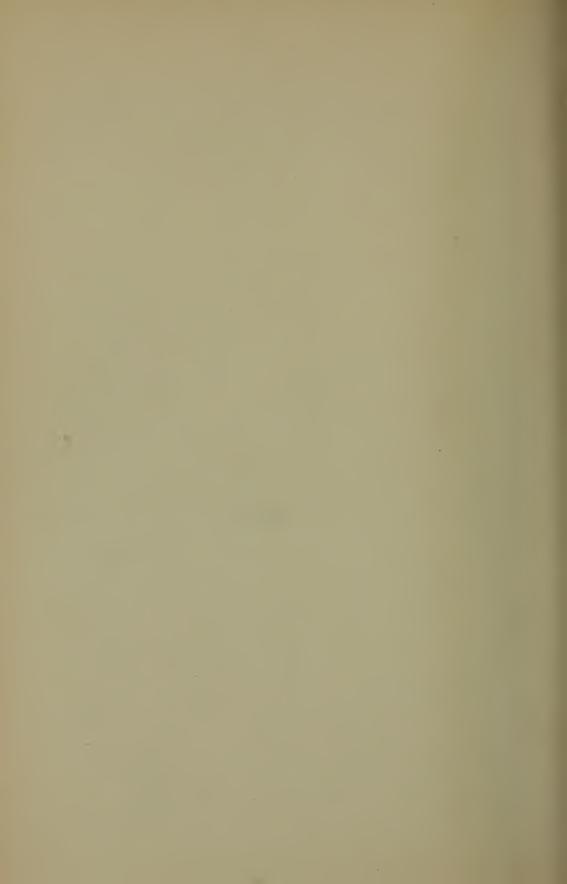
From Painting by Hofmann







THE MARTIAL CHORD



THE MARTIAL CHORD

Let your life-harp sound the note of courage. Dr. Watson's Christmas message to the world, "Be pitiful; every man is fighting a hard battle," is more generally needed than we realize, because it is so universally true. We are apt to think that ours is the only severe fight going on at the time, whereas every one who has not fully surrendered to the enemies of his life is having a fight on his hands every step of the way.

"What's the use?" is a current phrase, which expresses a soul-surrender. All about us men and women are taking their own lives because they have given up the struggle. Constantly they are pulling down the standards which once stood for ideals because they have lost hope in them. The white flag of capitulation flutters everywhere because hearts have lost courage. "There goes another disillusioned man," said a cynic, pointing to one whose face sounded retreat. "No," said his companion, "he is only discouraged." Men lie and steal because they are afraid. The dreadful story the papers tell every day of crime, deception, intrigue, and

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underground methods in the business world simply records the fact that a great lot of people are on the run. But these people are not the hopeless cravens you might think them. It is only needed that some one shall sound the martial note to recall them to the battle.

The splendid offices of music in arousing a courageous spirit are so well recognized as to afford us a forceful analogy. A charge of the Scots Greys can be arranged almost any time if you will play the bagpipes. Lord Wellesley declared that troops which march to music will travel farther and come into camp in much better shape than any others. It is not for art that the German army has a musical force of over ten thousand men, but for the most practical military purpose. Plutarch, describing the irresistible charge of the Spartans, said, "They advance, keeping pace to the time of their flutes, the music leading them into danger cheerful and unconcerned." I have read that after Lee's surrender, in 1865, a quartet of one of the Union regiments sang some of their army songs for a group of paroled Confederate officers. Among these were "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "We're Coming, Father Abra'm," "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching," and "The Star-Spangled Banner." They closed their entertainment with

"Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys," and one of the officers exclaimed: "Who couldn't have marched or fought with such songs! Gentlemen, if we'd had your songs, we'd have licked you out of your boots." Often in the days of minstrelsy, when fear, masked behind caution and diplomacy, ruled the council, the minstrel's harp infused such courage that the assembly broke up in a declaration of war.

Music is no less an agency in the battles of heart and soul, where "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." But the note that arrests us must come from the life-harp. Men who run from duty and conviction must have more than eloquence of word to steady the heart or nerve the arm for the conflict. No clangorous appeal or flourish of wordy trumpets can drown the din which a cowardly life makes. The refrain that inspires us with courage comes from the life that stands simply, but firmly at post of duty, or heads a desperate charge, or leads a forlorn hope. It is the tonic power of the quiet, controlled man that stays us in the panics of life.

Some one, describing the fear of the battle-field—the fear that led Marshal Ney, just before a charge, to apostrophize his trembling

legs—has said: "On the physical side it checks the flow of saliva and brings on the peculiar thirst of the battlefield; it causes organic derangement, muscular relaxation. On the mental side it paralyzes the intelligence and leads to the blind desire for flight, the flight of panic, a reflex and often involuntary act."

The description may stand for something that is occurring constantly in society about us. Nothing is more contagious than fear. A single man with ashen face, rushing to the rear, irresistibly draws some after him, and will shake the confidence of all about him.

Greed is nothing so much as the fear that in the distribution of things we shall not get our share, or that some one shall secure more than we do. And the thought of it sets whole multitudes surging back and forth in a wild mêlée of struggle for things of little comparative worth. So we have panics in Wall Street, panics over Western mines, a panic to get in on industrials, or some other stock which in a small but vivid way types the frenzy possessing millions with fear—fear on one extreme of the poorhouse, on the other that they will lose five millions and have but a meager twenty millions left! It is all cowardly. And men grow afraid to be honest, lest, after all, honesty is not the successful policy. They mistrust the Golden Rule.

They suspect it as a principle of modern commercialism. They are afraid to work quietly, surely, and faithfully, lest it mean failure.

The growing hold of amusement upon our modern life is very much like a panic. The crowds that at risk of life and limb rush for seats in our street cars and boats and "Fun Palaces" only picture the similar, though larger movement of society. Multitudes are possessed with the frantic fear that they will miss something—some new pleasure, some rare sensation. The breeding of generations is lost, for they dare not be courteous, lest some one get ahead of them. They are afraid to encumber themselves with kindliness, respect for others, and the amenities which had a place in the slow world of yesterday. It is the fear of not "getting there." And so they lose the delights and profit of meditation and introspection, the pleasure of the fireside with its companionships of people in and out of books, and forget how to be pleasantly serious, and how to achieve the simple inexpensive pleasures thrown in everyone's way.

It is in something of a panic too that men are abandoning the religious ideals and the standards of their fathers. Multitudes are pulling up the anchors that have held them, are leaving the refuges that have covered them, and have thrown away hope and faith in a wild movement from all shrines and altars.

But amid all this hurry and fear a man arises, calm, steady, standing like a rock in the path of retreat, quietly and joyously attesting in every deed his assurance of the unapproachable value of things ethical, æsthetic, and spiritual. His life arrests the drift. Men stop as if at a bugle-note, recognize it as the signal of heaven, and, accepting it as the call of duty, renew their fealty to the best things in life.

It was a martial air with which God surcharged the soul of Joshua with intrepidity— "Be strong and of good courage." No less does he sound it to-day in clarion tones from the heroic spirits who have battled through time for mighty purposes and to mighty ends. Luther's Battle Hymn was but the faint expression of a valorous soul which has infused generations since with the over-coming Spirit. The trumpet-blast of defiance from the life of Chrysostom has martialized whole generations of men.

"I will slay thee," said the emperor unto him.

"Nay, thou canst not, for my life is hid with Christ in God."

"I will take away thy treasures."

"Nay, that thou canst not do, for, in the

first place, I have none thou knowest of. My treasure is in heaven, and my heart is there."

"But I will drive thee away from man, and thou shalt have no friend left."

"Nay," said Chrysostom, "and that thou can'st not, for I have a Friend in heaven from whom thou can'st not separate me. I defy thee; there is nothing thou can'st do to hurt me."

When Gordon stood upon a parapet exposed to the fire of the enemy, and they called him to come down, an English soldier said: "It's all right. 'E don't mind being killed." But the real courage of the man affects us most when we see floating from his tent the white flag, which told a whole army that its leader was at prayer and must not be disturbed. And this aligns precisely with that type of courage which in mid-Africa calmly faced defeat, and met death where a neglectful and ungrateful government abandoned him at his post of duty.

Emerson's hero is the man who will "take both reputation and life in hand, and with perfect urbanity dare the gibbet and the mob by the absolute truth of his speech and rectitude of his behavior." And such a character is vibrant as a fife-and-drum corps with the strains that stir men to heroic action.

But most people fight all their years the

battle of which Creasy shall never hear. And they are the world's "Decisive Battles," though fought in obscurity and silence, without the pomp and spectacle and inspiration of war. Men there are who patiently accept the obligations and business of life with the handicaps of ill health, and a hard environment or depressing influences. No fierce charge which acts as a spur to lagging power; no glorious assault with its mad impetuosity; "having done all" just "to stand" at post of duty outlooking on dreary landscape, taking up, day after day, the monotonous round of the same old tasks. What an inspiring spectacle it was on the field of Murfreesboro when General Rosecrans, at the close of the first day's battle, disposed his command in a new position, and, turning, said to the army, "Gentlemen, we conquer or die here." And vet multitudes have deliberately planted their colors by a common, homely duty and, all unheard by the world, have as emphatically issued their challenge to encroaching trouble and invading trial. There is a boy who could charge a university and carry its courses by storm, who must be content to see his vision fade while he does battle with poverty at the door of the home. An artisan must be be all his days, but he is keeping his honor as purely as a Chevalier de Bayard, and the high

quality of his valor evokes the whole chord of martial music. Such people have no thought of the inspiring influence of their faithfulness, and little dream that their highest contribution to their fellows is the note of cheerful courage. Kent Knowlton says of one such:

A song welled up in the singer's heart Like a song in the throat of a bird, And loud he sang, and far it rang, For his heart was strangely stirred; And he sang for the very joy of song, With no thought of one who heard.

Within the listener's wayward soul
A heavenly patience grew,
He fared on his way with a benison
On the singer, who never knew
How the careless song of an idle hour
Had shaped a life anew.

Goethe makes a chance strain of an Easter hymn defeat the purpose of a suicide, a thought which Chopin has wrought into one of his nocturnes. We cannot do a worthy, faithful deed, without its being a song, though we know it not, to some despairing, hopeless soul. We cannot sing at our own work without setting in motion a song which will set many other hearts singing at theirs. If we utter one carol of praise, it will make itself a Hallelujah Chorus in other hearts. A woman who had dropped all her tasks in life and given herself up to

despair, one day heard a washer-woman sing-She stopped and said: "Why, good woman, how is it you can sing amid this," and she included the poverty and disheartening surroundings in an expressive sweep of her hand. And the other replied: "O, there's always such a good breeze in this alley." The disheartened one returned to her home with a song in her heart which broke from her lips the next day, and the poor despairing husband, worried by his business care and his wife's ill health, remembered it and hummed a tune at his office. A teamster who was waiting for his order looked up in surprise, but that night as he drove into his own doorvard he was whistling softly. His little girl heard him, and when with unwonted joy she clasped her arms about his neck, she expressed the pleasure of the little home as she said, "O papa, I didn't know you could whistle so beautiful."

We may be a Harp of God leading humanity in the New Song of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose blessed coming shall be with such harmony that "the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands, . . . and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

